

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 M-03 SS-10 BAL-03 PER-05 ABF-01 PM-07

RSC-01 RSR-01 /052 W

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R 131605Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 530

INFO DOD WASHDC

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 6032

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS VE

SUBJECT: STAFFING OF MILITARY GROUP

REF: (A) STATE 121324 (B) CARACAS 3572

SUMMARY: CUTS IN MILGP OF MAGNITUDE ENVISIONED REF B SHOULD BE PHASED OVER NEXT SIX YEARS SO AS NOT SUDDENLY TO CURTAIL MILGP EFFECTIVENESS AND LOSE INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR INFLUENCE OVER VENEZUELAN MILITARY. EMBASSY SCHEDULE PERMITS REDUCTION IN VISIBLE US MILITARY PRESENCE FROM 37 TO 22 POSITIONS. ACTION REQUESTED. THAT DEPARTMENT AND DOD APPROVE PROGRAMMED REDUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. BEFORE REPLYING TO REF A, AMBASSADOR AND STAFF WISHED TO HAVE BENEFIT OF CONSULTATIONS WITH USCINCSO AND REPRESENTATIVES GAO AND OMB, ALL OF WHOM VISITED CARACAS ABOUT SAME TIME. FURTHER, EMBASSY WISHED TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY VIEWS OF VENEZUELAN MILITARY. WITH REGARD TO LATTER, ARMY COMMANDING GENERAL SUCRE, CLOSE AND HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL FRIEND OF PRESIDENT CALDERA AND ALSO OF US, IS KNOWN TO BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO MASSIVE MILGP CUTS EXECUTED AT ONE TIME. SUCRE FAVORS EVEN CLOSER INTEGRATION OF MILGP WITH HIS COMMAND, AND HAS PROPOSED STATIONING MILGP ARMY SECTION PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT OFFICER IN HIS HEADQUARTERS STAFF. CLEARLY THIS WOULD BE TO US ADVANTAGE AND IN KEEPING WITH POLICIES EXPRESSED IN CASP AND PROGRAM OBJECTIVES MEMO-
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RANDUM (POM).

2. AMBASSADOR BELIEVES CUT OF MAGNITUDE ENVISIONED REF B SHOULD BE PHASED OVER SEVERAL FISCAL YEARS. FOLLOWING POSITIONS SHOULD BE CUT BY JUNE 30, 1974: ARMY SECTION COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER 03-08 (NOW VACANT); AIR FORCE SECTION OPERATIONS ADVISOR 05-05 (NOT CONSIDERED REQUIRED BY VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE AFTER THIS YEAR); NAVY SECTION COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS OFFICER 04-05 (DUTIES CAN BE ASSIGNED TO OTHER PERSONNEL); HEADQUARTERS JOINT TRAINING OFFICER 01-03 (DUTIES CAN BE ASSIGNED TO OTHER PERSONNEL); HEADQUARTERS

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISOR 02-02 (DUTIES CAN BE ASSIGNED TO OTHER PERSONNEL). NUMBERS REFER TO PARAGRAPHS AND LINES OF TABLE OF DISTRIBUTION AND ALLOWANCES--TDA.

3. THESE AND SUCCEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PREDICATED ON MILGP'S CONTINUING TO BE COMMANDED BY AN ARMY OFFICER OF NOT LOWER THAN RANK OF FULL COLONEL. AMBASSADOR REITERATES POSITION, WHICH WAS REPORTED TO USCINCSO IN CARACAS 7729 OF OCTOBE 5, 1972, AND SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED TO JCS, THAT MILGP COMMANDER SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE AN ARMY OFFICER BECAUSE IN VENEZUELAN ARMY (AS ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA) IS SENIOR AND PREMIER SERVICE AND IS THE KEY POLITICAL FORCE.

4. EITHER IN JUNE 1974 OR WHEN MAJOR CHANGES OCCUR IN MILGP MISSION, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST, AANOTHER REVIEW OF STAFFING WILL TAKE PLACE. IN ANY CASE, HOWEVER, BEGINNING IN FY 1975 REDUCTIONS ENVISAGED IN POM OF NOT LESS THAN 5 PCT PER FISCAL YEAR FOR PERIOD 1975-79 SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT. IF WE CALL THIS A TWO POSITION CUT PER YEAR, MILGP WILL BE REDUCED TO 22 US MILITARY IN LESS THAN SIX YEARS WITHOUT NEEDLESSLY IRRITATING VENEZUELAN MILITARY OR SHARPLY CURTAILING MILGP ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SALES AND INFLUENCE ON VENEZUELAN MILITARY, WITH WHICH WE ARE MOST CONCERNED. AMBASSADOR IS MOST INTERESTED IN CUTS IN VISIBLE US MILITARY PRESENCE, NOT SIMPLY CUTS IN AUTHORIZED STRENGTH; CUT IN LOCALS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL ARE RELATIVELY MEANINGLESS, SO FAR AS PROFILE IS CONCERNED.

5. ABOVE PROGRAM DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT FOR STATUTORY REASONS (E.G. VENEZUELAN TRADE WITH CUBA) MAP TRAINING COULD

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END WITHIN NEXT CALENDAR YEAR, MAKING POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS.

6. AMBASSADOR'S PERSONAL COMMENT. ALTHOUGH PROGRAM OUTLINE ABOVE MAY SUPERFICIALLY SEEM TO BE A WALK-BACK OF EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATION AS ADUMBRATED REF B, IN FACT AFTER REFLECTION IT IS MY CONSIDERED VIEW THAT WE WOULD ACHIEVE THE SAME OBJECTIVES WITH MORE DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGE TO OURSELVES IF WE

ADOPTED A SOMEWHAT MORE STATELY REDUCTION PROGRAM. AS
CONTRASTED TO REF B, WE ARE ASKING FOR THE ELIMINATION OF 15
MILGP POSITIONS BY JUNE 30, 1979, RATHER THAN 14 POSITIONS BY
JUNE 30, 1974. PROBABLY, AS INDICATED PARA 5, THERE WILL BE A
MANDATORY FURTHER CUT IF MAP TRAINING IS ELIMINATED. I THEREFORE
THINK THAT ON BALANCE THIS REFLECTIVE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL
MEET WITH GRACEFUL ACQUIESCENCE BY VENEZUELAN MILITARY AND
GOVERNMENT AND WILL PERHAPS BETTER SUIT OUR OWN INTERESTS AS
PERCEIVED BOTH BY STATE AND DOD.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973CARACA06032
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS MCCLINTOCK
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730736/aaaabaec.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 (A) STATE 121324 (B) CARACAS 3572
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by willialc>; APPROVED <01 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STAFFING OF MILITARY GROUP
TAGS: MASS, VE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005